

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04  
NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 L-03 NSC-05  
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /072 W  
-----079778 152356Z /13  
R 152326Z JUL 77  
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3568  
INFO ALL USCONS MEXICO BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 11824

E. O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, MX  
SUBJECT: THE END OF THE UNAM STRIKE -- NOT MUCH OF A WAKE

REF: MEXICO 11259

1. SUMMARY: ONE WEEK AFTER THE GOM OUSTED STRIKING STUNAM PERSONNEL FROM UNAM FACILITIES (REFTEL) SOME CLASSES ARE BEING RESUMED AND THE PUBLIC HAS TURNED TO OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST. FROM PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS AND MEDIA EDITORIAL OPINION, WE CONCLUDE THAT THE GOM WON A SIGNIFICANT VICTORY THROUGH ITS RESTRAINED AND CAREFULLY PLANNED CAMPAIGN. MOST SOURCES REGISTER RELIEF THAT THE CONTROVERSY DID NOT DEGENERATE INTO THE KIND OF BLOODY AND DIVISIVE CONFLICT EXPERIENCED IN 1968 AT TLATELOLCO, AND CREDIT THE GOVERNMENT FOR SKILLFUL HANDLING OF THE SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

2. CHRONOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENTS. THE GOM PATIENTLY LISTENED TO THE DEMANDS OF THE TWO LEGALLY RECOGNIZED UNIONS (SPAUNAM, WHICH REPRESENTS THE UNAM TEACHING STAFF, AND STEUNAM, THE WORKERS' AND EMPLOYEES' UNION) THROUGHOUT THE  
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MONTHS LEADING UP TO THE JUNE 20 STRIKE, BUT REFUSED TO CONCUR IN THE MERGER OF THE TWO INTO STUNAM A (PCM) MEXICAN COMMUNIST PARTY-SUPPORTED GROUP. THE GOM BASED ITS STANCE ON THE LEGAL GROUND THAT THE UNIVERSITY HAS BINDING COLLECTIVE CONTRACTS WITH STEUNAM AND SPAUNAM WHICH DO NOT EXPIRE UNTIL LATER IN THE YEAR. THE GOM STOOD FIRM UNTIL THE OUTSET OF THE STRIKE ON JUNE 20.

3. A FEW DAYS LATER, THE GOM ANNOUNCED THE "DECISION" OF THE NATIONAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION BOARD THAT THE STRIKE WAS ILLEGAL (TECHNICALLY ONLY AN "OPINION" SINCE THE BOARD HAS NO JURIDICAL POWER). SHORTLY AFTERWARD IT ANNOUNCED THAT ALL PERSONNEL WHO FAILED TO REGISTER TO RETURN TO THEIR JOBS WOULD BE DISMISSED ON JULY 1. UNAM AUTHORITIES CLAIMED THAT LESS THAN 600 OF THE NEAR 28,000 FAILED TO SIGN UP TO RETURN -- WHICH IS PROBABLY NEAR THE TRUTH SINCE A STUNAM LEADER LASHED OUT AT RECTOR SOBERON ON FOLLOWING DAY FOR "TAKING ADVANTAGE OF ONE OF THE GRAVEST STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS OF THE COUNTRY: UNEMPLOYMENT." ON JULY 2 SOME 8,000 JOB APPLICANTS WHO APPEARED AT A DOWNTOWN HOTEL TO RECORD THEIR INTEREST IN A JOB AT UNAM HAD TO BE DISPERSED BY POLICE USE OF TEAR GAS. IT WAS A CONTROL, NOT A POLITICAL, PROBLEM.

4. ON JULY 6 UNAM RECTOR SOBERON ANNOUNCED THAT 37 UNION LEADERS HAD BEEN DISMISSED FOR ABANDONING THEIR JOBS. THE SAME EVENING THOUSANDS OF TEACHERS, WORKERS AND STUDENTS DEMONSTRATED SUPPORT OF STRIKE BY PARADING DOWN THE REFORMA. MARCH WAS ORDERLY, WELL MONITORED BY POLICE AND CLEARLY SHOWED THROUGH PLACARDS AND BANNERS THAT THE AXE BEING GROUND WAS POLITICAL RATHER THAN AN ECONOMIC-TRADE UNION ISSUE. SIX MARCH LEADERS WERE REPORTEDLY TAKEN INTO CUSTODY AFTER PARADE. STAGE WAS SET FOR NEXT DAY'S EARLY-CONFIDENTIAL

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MORNING TAKEOVER OF UNAM BY CIVIL POLICE. GOM MOVE ON UNIVERSITY HAD BEEN LAID OUT IN DETAIL FOR A WEEK AT LEAST AND AWAITED ONLY THE GO-AHEAD SIGNAL FROM TOP LEVEL OF THE GOVERNMENT.

5. JULIO SCHERER GARCIA'S "PROCESO" ACCOUNT OF THIS OPERATION IS THE MOST DETAILED AND PROBABLY CLOSE TO ACCURATE, ALTHOUGH STATEMENT THAT POLICE USED TANKS, WHICH THEY DO NOT POSSESS, IS INCORRECT. ARMORED VEHICLES MAY HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED. "PROCESO" CLAIMS THAT A FORCE OF 12,000 UNIFORMED AND CIVILIAN-ATTIRED POLICE PARTICIPATED IN THE SEIZURE, THAT 531 STRIKERS WERE DETAINED AND THAT OVER 300 VEHICLES WERE USED. THEY REPORTED THAT "TENS" OF INJURED WERE HOSPITALIZED, BUT LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT OPERATION WAS CARRIED OUT WITH A MINIMUM OF VIOLENCE OR OPPOSITION. BY ALL ACCOUNTS ENCOUNTER LASTED NO MORE THAN A FEW HOURS. THE CAMPUS PROPERTY WAS TURNED OVER TO UNAM AUTHORITIES ON AFTERNOON OF JULY 7. PRESS REPORTED THAT 37 OF THE PRINCIPAL STUNAM LEADERS WERE IRREVOCABLY DISMISSED FROM THEIR UNAM JOBS FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN STRIKE.

6. COMMENT: STRIKE WAS POORLY PLANNED AND EXECUTED FROM

BEGINNING. STRIKERS' SENSELESS DESTRUCTION OF UNAM PROPERT-  
TY -- WELL COVERED BY THE PRESS, WHICH GOM HAD ORCHESTRATED  
WITH ALMOST NO DISCORDANT NOTES -- WON FEW FRIENDS FOR  
STRIKERS. ISSUE GENERATED TANGIBLE SUPPORT OF POSSIBLY  
20,000 TEACHERS AND STUDENTS WHO VOTED WITH THEIR FEET IN  
THE MARCH THE EVENING BEFORE THE SEIZURE, A LUKEWARM  
SHOWING FOR AN INSTITUTION OF 240,000 STUDENTS. AN AMERI-  
CAN SOURCE WITH UNAM TIES ESTIMATED THAT 60-70 OF THE  
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WERE IN SYMPATHY WITH STRIKE -- BUT  
SYMPATHY IS AN UNQUANTIFIABLE TERM. STUNAM'S CRUSADE FOR  
RECOGNITION AND A GENERAL WAGE INCREASE WAS NEVER ACKNOW-  
LEDGED BY GENERAL PUBLIC AS TRUE CAUSE FOR THE STRIKE.  
MOST FELT THE ISSUE WAS POLITICAL -- MARXIST CONTROL OVER

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NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 L-03 NSC-05  
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /072 W  
-----079866 152356Z /13

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3569  
INFO ALL USCONS MEXICO BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MEXICO 11824

THE UNAM UNIONS (THROUGH THE MERGER), AND EVENTUAL CONTROL  
OVER THE UNIVERSITY.

7. IN THE RANGE OF WHAT IT WAS AND WAS NOT, THE UNAM  
STRIKE IS PROBABLY LEAST OF ALL A REFLECTION OF A SPECIFIC  
UNIVERSITY PROBLEM OR OF LABOR-UNION INTEREST. THE CON-  
FRONTATION WAS THE MOST AMBITIOUS, THOUGH CERTAINLY NOT THE  
FIRST, CHALLENGE TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT. THE GAUNTLET WAS  
THROWN IN THIS CASE BY THE PCM AND STUNAM IN HOPES THAT THE  
DUEL WOULD DEMONSTRATE GOVERNMENT INCOMPETENCE, RELATIVELY  
EARLY IN THE ADMINISTRATION, MAKING IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR  
THE GOM TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC CONFIDENCE. UNAM WAS NOT CHOSEN  
FOR THE STRIKE BECAUSE ITS OWN SITUATION WAS MORE CRITICAL  
THAN IT HAS BEEN IN THE PAST. IN FACT, THE TIMING OF THE

STRIKE WAS NOT LOGICAL FROM A UNION STANDPOINT, BECAUSE CURRENT CONTRACTS DO NOT COME DUE UNTIL LATER 1977 AND 1978. HOWEVER, THE STRIKE-PROMOTERS RECOGNIZED UNAM'S POTENTIAL IN INTEREST-DRAWING AND CONFLICT-RAISING THROUGH ITS HIGHLY-CHARGED POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE. GIVEN THE VERY POOR GOM PERFORMANCE AT TLATELOLCO IN 1968, THERE WAS A GOOD POSSIBILITY THAT SYMPATHY WOULD FALL ON THE SIDE OF THE 1977

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STRIKERS. BUT THE ASSUMPTIONS PROVED WRONG. THE GOM APPARENTLY LEARNED ITS LESSON WELL. THE SECRETARY OF GOVERNMENT, REYES HEROLE, AS OPPOSED TO ECHEVERRIA IN 1968, KEPT A VERY LOW PROFILE. INDEED, SO DID MOST OF THE CABINET. THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION, PORFIRIO MUNOZ LEDO, LEFT FOR A TEACHERS' CONFERENCE IN THE SOUTHEAST AS SOON AS THE UNION OCCUPIERS HAD LEFT UNAM GROUNDS. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, WHO HAD BEEN CALLED UPON TO DECLARE THE STRIKE ILLEGAL, SPOKE FIRMLY BUT THROUGH A SUB-DIRECTOR AND ALWAYS CITED THE LEGAL BASIS FOR HIS ACTION. THE SECRETARY OF LABOR, OJEDA PAULLADA, MADE NO RASH OR EMOTIONAL STATEMENTS FOR QUOTATION.

8. ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT ULTIMATELY USED THE FEDERAL DISTRICT TRAFFIC POLICE FORCE (UNARMED) TO DISLODGE THE STRIKERS FROM THE UNAM CAMPUS, THE STRIKERS' CHECK WAS NEVER MATED. LOPEZ PORTILLO'S CAMPAIGN SLOGAN "WE ARE THE SOLUTION" REMAINS THE RULE OF THE DAY. IF ANYTHING, THE STRIKERS RUN THE ACTIVE RISK OF APPEARING TO BE THE TRAITORS WHO ARE TRYING TO KEEP LOPEZ PORTILLO'S WAGE POLICIES FROM TAKING EFFECT.

9. UNFORTUNATELY, THE TRUE VICTIM IN THIS CONTROVERSY IS THE UNIVERSITY ITSELF AND POSSIBLY THE RECTOR. ITS PERSONNEL AND STUDENTS HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY BECOME MORE POLARIZED THAN BEFORE, AND THE PHYSICAL DAMAGE HAS PROBABLY STRETCHED ITS ALREADY THIN BUDGET BEYOND THE BREAKING POINT. THERE IS TALK, BUT SO FAR LITTLE ELSE, ABOUT THE NEED TO REFORM THE UNIVERSITY STRUCTURE. SOME STUDENTS HAVE CALLED FOR THE RECTOR'S RESIGNATION. BUT ON BALANCE, THE STRIKE HAS LEFT ONLY A SMALL WAKE, AND THE GOM HAS GAINED CREDIT FOR ITS PRUDENT AND SOUND CONDUCT OF THE CASE. WISELY IT IS NOT CROWING ABOUT A VICTORY BUT IS EMPHASIZING

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ITS INTEREST IN BINDING UP WOUNDS. END COMMENT. LUCEY

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## Message Attributes

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